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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1062
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RUEHAD/AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI PRIORITY 2158
RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 8893
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 2131
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2962
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 2157
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0031
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 2901
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 9794
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 0270
RUEHRB/AMEMBASSY RABAT PRIORITY 6875
RUEHRO/AMEMBASSY ROME PRIORITY 4280
RUEHRH/AMEMBASSY RIYADH PRIORITY 9179
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 3370
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 5299
RUEHJM/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM PRIORITY 6813
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL PRIORITY
RHMFISS/COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY
RHMFIUU/COMSIXTHFLT PRIORITY

UNCLAS TEL AVIV 001401

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STATE FOR NEA, NEA/IPA, NEA/PPD

WHITE HOUSE FOR PRESS OFFICE, SIT ROOM
NSC FOR NEA STAFF

SECDEF WASHDC FOR USDP/ASD-PA/ASD-ISA
HQ USAF FOR XXXX
DA WASHDC FOR SASA
JOINT STAFF WASHDC FOR PA
CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL FOR POLAD/USIA ADVISOR
COMSOCEUR VAIHINGEN GE FOR PAO/POLAD
COMSIXTHFLT FOR 019

JERUSALEM ALSO ICD
LONDON ALSO FOR HKANONA AND POL
PARIS ALSO FOR POL
ROME FOR MFO

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E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [IS](#)

SUBJECT: ISRAEL MEDIA REACTION

SUBJECTS COVERED IN THIS REPORT:

[1](#)1. Mideast

[1](#)2. Iran

Key stories in the media:

Yediot reported on Sunday that Minister Amir Peretz has instructed

the official in charge of security for the ministry, Yehiel Horev, to begin an official investigation on whether an official of the Defense Ministry helped the USG draft its "benchmarks" document, which was presented to Israel ten days ago. According to the media, IDF officials strongly oppose the benchmark plan, especially the proposal to remove roadblocks across the West Bank and the resumption of "safe passage" for Palestinians between the West Bank and Gaza, saying it may spawn more terror. Ha'aretz reported that PM Olmert agreed with the IDF's stance.

All media reported that the security cabinet decided on Sunday to expand, but not escalate, the latest Gaza operation. The media noted that the cabinet has adopted a vague stance, postponing further decisions until next week.

All media reported that four Palestinian were killed and 14 hurt in a new wave of Gaza infighting. The Fatah and Hamas militants blame each other for the renewed violence..

On Sunday, Ha'aretz reported that Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Chairman Mahmoud Abbas are scheduled to meet in a few weeks to discuss the future of a Palestinian state.

All media on Sunday quoted Minister of Foreign Affairs Tzipi Livni as saying that Israel will have to make territorial withdraws from the West Bank in order for a Palestinian state to be established.

All media quoted Mossad Chief Meir Dagan as saying in a closed forum last week that even if Israel decides to hold talks with Syrian President Bashar Assad, he will not cease support for Hizbullah. He also warned that the chances of war with Syria will increase if Israel enters negotiations that fail. Maariv cited Minister of Defense Amir Peretz as saying in an interview on Channel 10 that PM Olmert should meet the Syrian President and that he himself is not afraid to meet with him.

All media reported that a visit by Jordan King Abdullah to Ramallah was postponed due to bad weather.

Ha'aretz reported on Sunday that Israelis and Palestinians are planning to establish five industrial zones close to the Green Line, which would supply hundreds of jobs for Palestinians. The information was disclosed to the paper by Deputy Minister of Defense Efrayim Sneh.

Sunday's Ha'aretz cited US Deputy National Security Advisor Elliot Abrams as saying to a group of Jewish Republicans that the effort the US is investing in the Israeli Palestinian conflict are aimed at reducing pressure from Arabs and Europeans.

Leading media reported on Sunday that the waiting time for Israeli citizens to get a US visa is two months. The papers quoted a US Embassy press release encouraging people to apply for their visas as early as possible, since the waiting time for an interview is very long due to high demand in the summer months.

11. Mideast:

Summary:

Palestinian affairs correspondent Danny Rubinstein wrote in the left leaning, independent Ha'aretz (05/14): "In other words, the government of Israel can and should try the diplomatic way to stop the firing of the Qassams -- by agreeing to expand the truce to the West Bank as well."

Right-wing columnist Elyakim Ha'etzni wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (05/14): "If there is any chance of preventing the 'next war or the 'summer war' it is only if Israel signals that it is still capable of uniting.... If a war is declared upon us after all, a unity government would be ideal to prepare for it. Unity is also desired facing the Iranian threat."

Block Quotes:

1I. "Extend the Truce to the West Bank"

Palestinian affairs correspondent Danny Rubinstein wrote in the left leaning, independent Ha'aretz (05/14): "It is doubtful that there are any reasonable military means for stopping the firing of Qassam missiles at Israel. However, it is perfectly clear to all Palestinian spokesmen, as well as to a good many Israelis, that there is only one diplomatic way to stop the Qassam attacks, and that is to extend the fragile truce in Gaza to the West Bank as well. To put this more clearly: It is necessary to stop preventive actions taken by the Israel Defense Forces in Judea and Samaria.... The prevailing Israeli argument has been that the IDF has to act in the West Bank because that is where the terror cells that prepare suicide attacks are organized. It is difficult to accept this argument because preparation for such attacks inside Israel is going full steam ahead not only in the West Bank, but also in the Gaza Strip and southern Lebanon and undoubtedly also in Syria. There is a series of reasons, diplomatic and other, that the government of Israel is not sending the IDF to act against everyone who is organizing to harm us, and it is definitely possible to use these reasons to explain what goes on in Jenin, Nablus and Tul Karm as well. In other words, the government of Israel can and should try the diplomatic way to stop the firing of the Qassams -- by agreeing to expand the truce to the West Bank as well."

II. "Unity Government - Now"

Right-wing columnist Elyakim Ha'etzni wrote in the mass-circulation, pluralist Yediot Aharonot (05/14): "Ehud Barak's idea might pull this country out from the mud: a date for general elections would be decided by all parties and in the intermediate time -- a year at the most -- an emergency unity government would be established. If there is any chance of preventing the 'next war or the 'summer war' it is only if Israel signals that it is still capable of uniting.... If a war is declared upon us after all, a unity government would be ideal to prepare for it. Unity is also desired facing the Iranian threat.... National unity would announce that we have found powers within us to stand on our feet again.... A unity government would give each side -- left and right -- what it wants: the building of the separation fence will continue but the suffocation of the settlements will stop.... National unity is good for economy, it would do us good among the Jewish world and towards elections it would grant everyone a fair chance. And if it lowers, even by little the inner hatred among us -- amen."

12. Iran:

Summary:

The conservative, independent the Jerusalem Post wrote (05/14): "In principle, there is nothing wrong with a second track indicating that the door is open if Iran were to decide that it was abandoning terrorism and aggression, nuclear-backed and otherwise. The problem is that this second track has no chance of bearing fruit unless the first track, the 'or else' side of the equation, is greatly ratcheted up."

Block Quotes:

"Mixed Signals"

The conservative, independent the Jerusalem Post wrote (05/14): "Judging from the headlines, ViQ President Dick Cheney did some serious saber-rattling against Iran during his swing through the region last week.... Just a week before Cheney's tough speech, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice met briefly with Iran's foreign

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minister at a conference on Iraq.... In principle, there is nothing wrong with a second track indicating that the door is open if Iran were to decide that it was abandoning terrorism and aggression, nuclear-backed and otherwise. The problem is that this second track has no chance of bearing fruit unless the first track, the 'or else'

side of the equation, is greatly ratcheted up. According to a new Web site tracking trade with and investment in Iran ... global investment in Iran rose from about \$5 billion in mid-2006 to over \$45b. in the first few months of this year.... In this context, it is not surprising that Iran does not take the West's sanctions too seriously, certainly not seriously enough to abandon its nuclear program. For Western policy to work, Iran must understand two things: both that sanctions will be drastically tightened and that there is a meaningful threat of military action if sanctions are not effective. Cheney's speech notwithstanding, military threats are unlikely to be credible unless the sanctions piece is being seriously pursued not just by the US, but by Europe as well."

SIEVERS